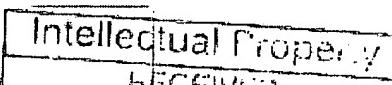


PATENT COOPERATION TREATY
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From the
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

To:

WICKHAM, Michael
The Boc Group Plc
Chertsey Road
Windlesham
Surrey GU20 6HJ
GRANDE BRETAGNE

 RECEIVED For <i>M/W</i>		NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT (PCT Rule 71.1)	
<i>Dave</i>		Date of mailing (day/month/year) 24.09.2004	
Applicant's or agent's file reference M02B129.MW		IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION	
International application No. PCT/GB 03/02464	International filing date (day/month/year) 09.06.2003	Priority date (day/month/year) 11.06.2002	
<p>Applicant THE BOC GROUP PLC et al.</p>			

1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary examination report and its annexes, if any, established on the international application.
2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.
3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translation to those Offices.
4. **REMINDER**

The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices) (Article 39(1)) (see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB/301).

Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary examination report. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide.

The applicant's attention is drawn to Article 33(5), which provides that the criteria of novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability described in Article 33(2) to (4) merely serve the purposes of international preliminary examination and that "any Contracting State may apply additional or different criteria for the purposes of deciding whether, in that State, the claimed invention is patentable or not" (see also Article 27(5)). Such additional criteria may relate, for example, to exemptions from patentability, requirements for enabling disclosure, clarity and support for the claims.

Name and mailing address of the International preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmis d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized Officer Almudé Murillo, J-A Tel. +49 89 2399-8059
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PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT
(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference MO2B129/MW	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/APEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/GB 03/02464	International filing date (day/month/year) 09.06.2003	Priority date (day/month/year) 11.06.2002
International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC C22C33/04		
Applicant THE BOC GROUP PLC et al.		

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.
2. This REPORT consists of a total of 4 sheets, including this cover sheet.
- This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).
- These annexes consist of a total of 5 sheets.
3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:
- I Basis of the opinion
 - II. Priority
 - III. Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
 - IV. Lack of unity of invention
 - V. Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
 - VI. Certain documents cited
 - VII. Certain defects in the international application
 - VIII. Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 09.12.2003	Date of completion of this report 24.09.2004
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Fax: 523658 epmud Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized Officer  Catana, C Telephone No: +49 89 2399-7369

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No. PCT/GB 03/02464

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the elements of the international application (*Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17)*):

Description, Pages

1, 2, 4, 5, 7-16 as originally filed
3, 6 received on 12.03.2004 with letter of 11.03.2004

Claims, Numbers

1-21 received on 12.03.2004 with letter of 11.03.2004

Drawings, Sheets

1/3-3/3 as originally filed.

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of International preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide-and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- contained in the international application in written form.
- filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- the description, pages:
- the claims, Nos.: 22
- the drawings, sheets:

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**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/GB 03/02464

5. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)).

(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)

6. Additional observations, if necessary:

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes: Claims	1-21
	No: Claims	
Inventive step (IS)	Yes: Claims	1-21
	No: Claims	
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes: Claims	1-21
	No: Claims	

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/GB 03/02464

The method of refining a ferroalloy (i.e. ferrochromium, ferromanganese) using injection of particulate materials to be included in the refined alloy using a supersonic gas jet shrouded by another supersonic gas jet is not disclosed or does not appear obvious in the light of available prior art documents.

The method as defined in claim 1 enhances the processes of ferroalloys refining (increase of productivity, less wear of lining, better confinement of particles in the melt) (see page 4, 1st and 2nd par.; paragraph bridging pages 6 and 7).

The subject-matter of claim 1 and of the dependent claims thereof fulfil the conditions of Art. 33(2)-33(3) PCT.